

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 01534 01 OF 03 191317Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NEA-09 EB-07 COME-00 OMB-01

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 FEA-01 OES-03 INT-05 STR-01 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5982

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 01534

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES INTERVIEW
IN LE MONDE JANUARY 19

1. JAN 19 ISSUE OF LE MONDE CARRIES QUESTION AND ANSWER INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES. LE MONDE FOREIGN AFFAIRS REPORTER MICHEL TATU INFORMED EMBOFF FRIDAY THAT HE CONDUCTED THE INTERVIEW. ORIENTATION OF QUESTIONS CONSISTENT WITH CONTINUING EFFORTS BY TATU AND OTHER MONDE JOURNALISTS TO EMBARRASS GOF INTERNALLY BY DEPICTING FOREIGN POLICY AS INCREASINGLY PRO-ATLANTIC, AND TO DRAW GOF INTO PUBLIC POLEMIC WITH USG ON MIDDLE EAST/OIL QUESTIONS. SAUVAGNARGUES' REPLIES MAINTAIN SAME PUBLIC LINE THAT GOF HAS BEEN FOLLOWING SINCE MARTINIQUE, BUT IN VIEW DISTORTIONS IN LE MONDE HEADLINES, KEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ARE TRANSMITTED BELOW.

2. MONDE: ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE MOST RECENT
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PAGE 02 PARIS 01534 01 OF 03 191317Z

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, ESPECIALLY THE SOVIET

RENUNCIATION OF THE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S.
AND THE SOUNDS OF IMPENDING WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
SAUVAGNARGUES: OBVIOUSLY, THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
PROVIDES REASONS FOR WORRY. THE COMBINATION OF THE
ENERGY CRISIS AND THE ABSENCE OF A SOLUTION IN THE
MIDDLE EAST NECESSARILY CONSTITUTE IMPORTANT DANGERS.
OUR ACTIONS FOR THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS HAVE BEEN
ORIENTED AS A FUNCTION OF THESE DANGERS. WILL THE
EVENTS TO WHICH YOU REFER AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION?
PERSONALLY, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE NON-APPLICATION
OF THE TRADE AGREEMENT WILL UNDERMINE THE POLICY OF
DETENTE. I WILL NOT INTERPRET WHAT BROUGHT
ON A DECISION WHICH WAS APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BY A
SOVIET NEED TO REJECT THOSE PROVISIONS CONSIDERED AS
ATTACKS ON ITS SOVEREIGNTY. IT WAS NOT UNEXPECTED.
I AM INCLINED TO CONSIDER IT AS JUST AN EPISODE WHOSE
RAMIFICATIONS SHOULD NOT BE OVEREXAGGERATED.

3. MONDE: IS IT A QUESTION OF A HARDENING OF SOVIET
POLICY BASED ON FACTORS OF INTERNAL POLITICS?

SAUVAGNARGUES: SPECULATION ABOUT THE INTERNAL
SOVIET SITUATION IS ALWAYS A MATTER OF GUESSWORK.
WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT THE USSR IS A GREAT POWER
WHICH IS EMPHASIZING THAT SHE WILL NOT ACCEPT POLICY
DICTATION, AND THAT A PROBLEM LIKE THE MIDDLE EAST
CANNOT BE SETTLED WITHOUT HER.

4. MONDE: BUT THERE IS ALSO A HARDENING ON DR.
KISSINGER'S SIDE WITH HIS THREATS TO RESORT TO FORCE
ABOUT WHICH FRANCE REMAINS SILENT.

SAUVAGNARGUES: I DO NOT CONSIDER IT USEFUL
TO CRITICIZE STATEMENTS MADE BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT.
WE WOULD NOT LIKE OTHERS TO DO IT TO US. THIS ELE-
MENTARY COURTESY DOES NOT IMPLY ANY APPROVAL OF A
THESIS WHICH, IN ANY EVENT, I AM UNABLE TO FIND IN
THE STATEMENTS IN QUESTION. ABOUT THIS MATTER,
I REMAIN FOCUSED ON THE MARTINIQUE DISCUSSIONS
WHERE ALL THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WERE RAISED.
THE CONCLUSION SPEAKS FOR ITSELF: THE RESULTS OF
THE FRANCO-AMERICAN SUMMIT POINT TOWARD CONCILIATION,
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PAGE 03 PARIS 01534 01 OF 03 191317Z

NOT CONFRONTATION.

5. MONDE: IS MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST TECHNICALLY IMAGINABLE?

SAUVAGNARGUES: I AM NOT A MILITARY EXPERT.
IT SEEMS TO ME, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN IF SUCH AN
ACTION WERE MILITARILY POSSIBLE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT
TO CONCEIVE OF IT POLITICALLY BECAUSE ITS CONSEQUENCES

WOULD BE EXTREMELY GRAVE.

6. MONDE: HAVE THE AMERICANS GIVEN YOU
ANY EXPLANATIONS?

SAUVAGNARGUES: THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CAME TO
INFORM ME THAT DR. KISSINGER'S STATEMENTS ABOUT
EUROPE CONCERNED THE PAST, WHICH IS THE WAY I HAD
INTERPRETED THEM IN ANY EVENT.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 01534 02 OF 03 191316Z

44

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 01534

7. MONDE: MR. FORD HAS ALSO AFFIRMED THAT THE
U.S. MUST EXERCISE LEADERSHIP OF THE WEST. BY NOT
SAYING ANYTHING, AREN'T YOU GIVING THE
IMPRESSION THAT YOU ARE ACQUIESCING?

SAUVAGNARGUES: AT A MOMENT WHEN WE INTEND
WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS TO SUCCEED IN ORGANIZING
A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE BETWEEN OIL CONSUMERS AND
PRODUCERS, WE FEEL IT WOULD NOT BE VERY HELPFUL FOR
FRANCE AND THE U.S. TO ENGAGE IN PUBLIC RECRIMINA-

TIONS. THAT WOULD NOT BE FAVORABLE TO THE ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVE, WHICH IS TO AVOID REACHING AN INEXTRICABLE SITUATION CAUSED BY CONTINUING CONFRONTATIONS. SUCH A SITUATION WOULD NOT, BY THE WAY, NECESSARILY BE THE CAUSE OF A GENERALISED CONFLICT, BUT WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR EVERYBODY. WE MUST ESTABLISH PROCEDURES OF DIALOGUE.

8. MONDE: BUT ISN'T GOF SILENCE THREATENING TO COMPROMISE THE PREPARATION OF THE CONFERENCE? LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 01534 02 OF 03 191316Z

SAUVAGNARGUES: NO, NONE OF OUR PARTNERS ARE IMPUGNING OUR MOTIVES THE WAY SOME PEOPLE IN FRANCE ARE DOING. OUR ACTIONS AND THE RESULTS OBTAINED AT MARTINIQUE ARE MORE ELOQUENT THAN WHAT YOU CALL OUR SILENCE.

9. MONDE: HOW IS THE PREPARATION OF THIS CONFERENCE COMING?

SAUVAGNARGUES: WE ARE STILL AT THE STAGE ANTERIOR TO THE CALLING OF A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE, WHICH IS THAT OF CONSULTATIONS AMONG CONSUMERS WITHIN THE OECD AND WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. THIS COOPERATION AMONG CONSUMERS DOES NOT SIGNIFY AT ALL THAT WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF CONSTITUTING A TIGHTLY-KNIT BLOCK, BUT THAT WE ARE DOING IN A CONVERGENT MANNER WHAT FRANCE HAS ADVOCATED FROM THE BEGINNING, TAKING THOSE MEASURES DESIGNED TO REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE BASED ON ENERGY.

10. MONDE: HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PARTICIPANTS?

SAUVAGNARGUES: BEFORE MARTINIQUE, WE HAD CONVERSATIONS WITH ALL OF THE GOVERNMENTS ON THE YAMANI LIST. ALL RESPONSES WERE POSITIVE. A PROCESS OF CONSULTATION IS TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE INTERESTED GROUPS, AND BETWEEN THEM. AT PRESENT, WE ARE TRYING TO PREVENT THE FORMATION OF ANTAGONISTIC BLOCS.

11. MONDE: DOES FRANCE HAVE A SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE WITH RESPECT TO PRICES?

SAUVAGNARGUES: WE WANT TO ARRIVE AT A SITUATION IN WHICH WE WILL NO LONGER BE EXPOSED TO UNILATERAL AND UNEXPECTED INCREASES, AND IN WHICH A BALANCE WILL BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE RESPECTIVE INTERESTS.

12. MONDE: DOES FRANCE SHARE DR. KISSINGER'S IDEA OF TRADING OFF THE INDEXATION OF OIL AGAINST

A LOWERING OF THE PRICE?

SAUVAGNARGUES: THE SEARCH FOR AN EQUILIBRIUM
BETWEEN THE PRICE OF OIL AND THAT OF INDUSTRIAL
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PAGE 03 PARIS 01534 02 OF 03 191316Z

COMMODITIES IMPLIES, WITHOUT DOUBT, AS THE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC HAS EMPHASIZED, THAT THE BASE OF
DEPARTURE BE REASONABLE.

13. MONDE: WHY HASN'T FRANCE JOINED THE
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY?

SAUVAGNARGUES: FIRST, BECAUSE RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY,
THE AGENCY WAS IN DANGER OF BEING CONSIDERED AS AN
ELEMENT OF CONFRONTATION. WE THEREFORE FELT THAT
OUR JOINING WOULD HAVE COPROMISED OUR POLICY OF
CONCILIATION. SECONDLY, WE FELT, AND WE CONTINUE
TO FEEL, THAT IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT EIGHT OF OUR
EUROPEAN PARTNERS CONSIDER ONLY IN THE AGENCY ISSUES
THAT ARE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE FOR EUROPE.
I WOULD ESPECIALLY CITE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RE-
SOURCES, IN PARTICULAR THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 01534 03 OF 03 191318Z

44

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 01534

14. MONDE: THERE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM BESIDE OIL. AT THE END OF APRIL, THE MANDATE OF THE UN FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL EXPIRE, AND WE WILL ARRIVE AT A DANGER POINT ABOUT WHICH FRANCE AND EUROPE APPEAR TO BE INDIFFERENT, SINCE THEY ARE NOT EXPRESSING ANY SORT OF OPINION.

SAUVAGNARGUES: WE ARE FAR FROM INDIFFERENT ABOUT MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY ARE IN THE CENTER OF OUR CONCERNS, AND I BELIEVE WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT. BUT CERTAIN COMMENTARIES, NOTABLY THOSE WHICH FOLLOWED MY MEETING WITH ARAFAT, SHOW THAT IN THIS MATTER WE ARE EXPOSED TO THE CONTRADICTORY REPROACHES OF HAVING DONE EITHER TOO MUCH OR NOTHING AT ALL. THE REALITY IS THAT WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO BECOME INVOLVED, AND THAT WE ARE DOING ALL THAT WE CAN IN THE INTEREST OF FINDING A PEACEFUL AND DURABLE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 01534 03 OF 03 191318Z

SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE REPEAT UNTIRINGLY THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION, AND THAT ALL RESORT TO FORCE WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC FOR ISRAEL, AND FOR THE ARABS, BUT ALSO FOR EUROPE, WHOSE VITAL INTERESTS WOULD BE AFFECTED.

15. MONDE: ARE THE STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS ENVISAGED BY DR. KISSINGER THE BEST METHOD?

SAUVAGNARGUES: I DO NOT CRITICIZE THAT METHOD IN ANY MANNER. IF THERE IS DISENGAGEMENT IN THE SINAI THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY, I WILL BE THE FIRST TO APPLAUD. BUT OUR ESSENTIAL IDEA IS THAT THE DYNAMICS OF PEACE SHOULD NOT BOG DOWN EVEN IN THE WAKE OF A NEW PARTIAL AGREEMENT. THE ROAD TOWARD PEACE CAN ONLY BE LONG AND PROGRESSIVE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT. EVEN IF WE COULD HAVE HOPED FOR A MORE ACTIVE INTERVENTION ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE SAME VIEWS ABOUT THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A SOLUTION, WHAT WE HOPE ABOVE ALL IS THAT THE DISCUSSION OF A GENERAL SETTLEMENT BE INITIATED IN A PERIOD OF TIME THAT DOES

NOT CONSTITUTE AN INDEFINITE DELAY. WE ARE NOT SURE
THAT A REQUEST FOR FRENCH PARTICIPATION WOULD HASTEN
THAT DATE, BUT OBVIOUSLY, AS SOON AS THE DISCUSSIONS
HAVE STARTED AND PROGRESSED, WE WILL RECALL THAT
FRANCE AND EUROPE ARE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
GUARANTEES THAT A SETTLEMENT WILL INCLUDE, AND THAT
A SETTLEMENT SHOULD NOT COME ABOUT WITHOUT US.
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